

# Craig R. Fry

## Indiana State Representative, District 5



Summer, 2001

Dear Friends:

The 2001 long session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended with the passage of a new state budget and several other important pieces of legislation. I am pleased we completed our work on time in a bipartisan manner.

The new two-year state budget includes increased funding for education, CHOICE and other important programs while avoiding a general tax increase. Since there were five general tax increases in the 1980s, I'm pleased to report that this is the seventh session (14 years) under Democratic governors that there has not been a general tax increase. This year's budget also will include funding for several important local projects that are detailed inside this newsletter.

We passed several other laws that will benefit our state in a variety of areas, including health care, education, crime, election reform and environmental protection. We hopefully made improvements to our license branch operations and passed legislation that will protect consumers from annoying telephone calls with the establishment of a do-not-call list. I have described many of these new laws in the next few pages.

In addition, you will find a map of our legislative district. We are required to redraw the district boundaries every 10 years due to population shifts.

Please contact my office if you have additional concerns or questions about state government. You may e-mail me at [H5@ai.org](mailto:H5@ai.org) or call toll-free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

**CONTACT**  
REPRESENTATIVE  
CRAIG R. FRY



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# New budget increases school support, local development

Going into the 2001 legislative session, many observers felt that a sluggish economy would make it difficult to enact a biennial state budget without either passing a general tax increase or cutting funding for critical areas like public education. However, the budget bill that became law continues our record of avoiding general tax increases, while providing additional state support to our schools, health care and local projects.

The final version of House Enrolled Act 1001 enables the state to increase support for public schools across Indiana by an average of 3.5 percent each of the next two fiscal years, with minimum guarantees built in to help schools avoid cutting programs and personnel. Funding for higher education was increased by an average of 3.2 percent each year.

## Services and local development

The budget includes additional funding for the CHOICE program that provides in-home care services for the elderly and disabled, as well as Build Indiana Fund support for research and technology, community wastewater and drinking water grants, airport development and improvements to voting systems.

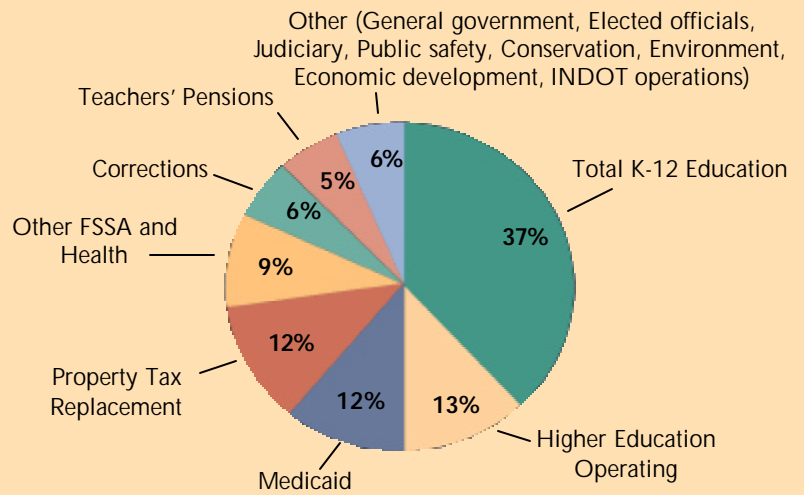
## Tax relief

It was disappointing that we were unable to provide the levels of tax relief that were included in past state budgets, but I am pleased that we were able to extend the life of the homestead credit at 10 percent and maintain the earned income tax credit that assists working families on lower incomes.

Businesses and farms will receive an income tax credit on personal property beginning in 2003, and mobile homes have been changed to be treated as real property with similar deductions. The budget bill continues to fund a statewide property tax relief program that now takes about 16 percent off all property taxes. When coupled with the 10 percent homestead credit, that translates to savings of around 26 percent.

A bill the size of the budget does not contain everything I would like, but considering the fiscal restraints facing legislators going into the 2001 session, I feel this budget is a major accomplishment.

## Spending highlights from the 2001-2003 budget



## Autistic patients, utility reform focus of Fry legislation



REP. FRY STUDIES LEGISLATION WITH SPEAKER JOHN GREGG (D - SANDBORN).

Families of autistic patients will be able to receive insurance benefits soon thanks to HEA 1122. This bill, which I authored, requires insurance companies and HMOs to provide coverage for the treatment of pervasive neurological developmental disorders like autism.

Early detection is imperative to the correct diagnosis of autism. Without insurance policies, many parents cannot afford to give their children the necessary treatment. Studies show that more than 50 percent of young children who receive appropriate medical treatment are able to return to mainstream society and lead normal, productive lives.

While it was very satisfying for me to watch the autism bill become law, I was frustrated this year in my efforts to bring Hoosiers utility reform. Despite passing in the House, the Senate failed to pass the bill I authored which would have given the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission the ability to levy financial penalties against utilities that consistently violate state rules and regulations. Another bill that I authored, aimed at increasing state and local input over issues surrounding merchant power plants, was also defeated.

People are fed up with poor service and demand more accountability from the companies that provide everyday necessities. Although we were thwarted in our efforts this year, I will continue to pursue this issue in the legislature next year and in the future, until the needs of the people are met.



## Domestic violence law reform, economic development

One of the major accomplishments of the 2001 session is passage of legislation that will help protect victims of domestic violence. HEA 1874 assures that people victimized by domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault do not have to pay a fee in order to obtain a protective order. This change brings Indiana into compliance with the federal Violence Against Women Act of 2000.

The legislation also enables a judge to consider incidents of domestic violence that have taken place in front of a child when sentencing an offender. Indiana will be required to register and enforce protective orders issued by other states. Law enforcement officers and governmental entities will be granted immunity for enforcing an order issued in good faith.

### Job training

HEA 1962 creates the Skills 2016 Job

Training Program. Qualified workers already on the job will be able to get access to additional instruction to gain new skills, while those just entering the work force will be able to take part in improved industrial and building trades programs offered by Ivy Tech State College.

### Individual Development Accounts

Since 1997, Hoosiers on moderate and lower incomes have had the chance to use the Individual Development Account (IDA) program to pursue the dream of buying a home, starting a business or going to college. HEA 2130 makes that program permanent and expands eligibility requirements to those earning 175 percent of the federal income poverty level. By setting aside some of their own money, people in the program can obtain state matching funds to give them a boost toward achieving their goals.

## Build Indiana Funds go to District 5

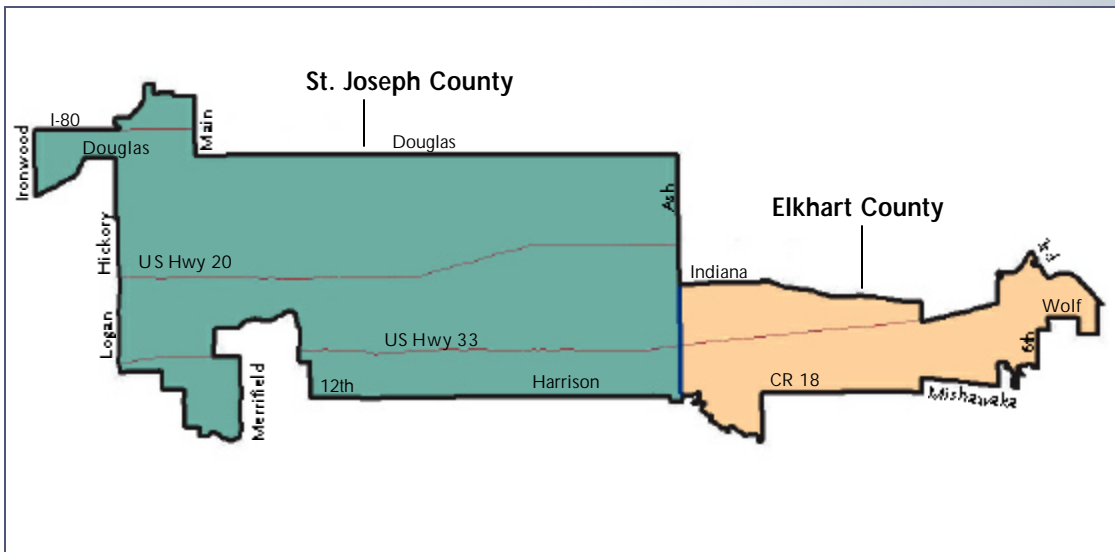
Since the Hoosier Lottery began in 1989, a portion of the earnings has gone to local development. I was able to bring \$500,000 in BIF money to the following organizations in our district:



REP. FRY ADDRESSES  
THE HOUSE.

- School City of Mishawaka
- Elkhart Housing Authority: PULL
- Elkhart Black Expo
- Penn North Volunteer Fire Dept. St. Joseph Co.
- Osceola Volunteer Fire Dept. Elkhart Co.
- Northside Little League St. Joseph Co.
- East End Little League St. Joseph Co.
- Southwest Little League St. Joseph Co.
- Osceola Little League Elkhart Co.
- Baugo Township Little League Elkhart Co.
- Hannah's House Mishawaka
- Osceola: dry wells St. Joseph Co.
- Mishawaka: road projects
- Elkhart: road projects

## The look of District 5



During this year's session, you may have heard about redistricting in the news. After each census, the Indiana General Assembly is required by law to redraw House, Senate and Congressional district boundaries according to population changes.

Each district must have 60,000 people, which means that as the population moves to or from various parts of the state, boundaries shift to reflect that change. District boundaries are very complicated, and it took months of effort and plenty of debate among legislators. In the end, however, I feel that the district lines we have drawn are as fair as possible.

I look forward to serving you. Please contact me if you have questions about the district or any other matters.





**Representative Craig R. Fry**  
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Representatives

## Privacy from telemarketers and license branch improvements

Stay informed about these  
and other issues online with  
Representative Fry



Web: [www.in.gov/R5](http://www.in.gov/R5)

E-mail: [H5@ai.org](mailto:H5@ai.org)

### Do-not-call list

In 2001, lawmakers took steps to help reduce the interruption of telemarketers calling you at home. Through House Enrolled Act 1222, you will be able to have your name placed on a do-not-call list that will **prohibit most solicitors from contacting you via the telephone**. To be placed on the list, contact the Office of the Indiana Attorney General about the **Telephone Privacy List at 1-888-834-9969**.

### License branch reform

Patrons and employees of license branches will be pleased with changes enacted by the Legislature this year, which should

make the process of conducting business at the license branch more efficient.

House Enrolled Act 1170 contains the following changes:

- Drivers will be able to renew their licenses through the mail and over the Internet.
- Drivers will be able to register their vehicles in any county in the state.
- Vehicle registration deadlines will be staggered to reduce lines. Deadlines will come twice a month.
- The state will have to conduct a public hearing before closing any license branch.